



## Pain: The Fifth Vital Sign

*Vital Signs are taken seriously. If pain were assessed with the same zeal as other vital signs are, it would have a much better chance of being treated properly. We need to train doctors and nurses to treat pain as a vital sign. Quality care means that pain is measured and treated.*

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### FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE PAIN ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT

- ✓ Consider pain the fifth vital sign and assess patients for pain every time you check for pulse, blood pressure, core temperature, and respiration.
- ✓ Urge your colleagues to take their patients' complaints of pain seriously. Remind them not to put patients in the position of asking for a favor when they want pain relief.
- ✓ Inform patients that they deserve to have their pain evaluated and treated.
- ✓ Work to implement the APS *Quality Improvement Guidelines for the Treatment of Acute Pain and Cancer Pain* in your own practice setting. (JAMA, 274, 1874-1880)
- ✓ Wear your [Fifth Vital Sign button](#) and make opportunities to explain the importance of pain evaluation and treatment to other healthcare professionals and to the public.



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